

The Deep Treasure of God

"Everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature" (Hebrews 5:13&14). According to this passage, the immature believer is not able to partake of "solid food." What characterizes a mature believer? Is it vast Bible knowledge? Is it an ability to have answers to life's tough questions? If we rely on the analogy contained in the passage, it would seem that the "mature" believer should in some way be "well fed." What then is it like for a believer to be "well fed" spiritually speaking? From the analogy, it would seem that a well-nourished believer should in some way be satisfied in the inner man, "like a tree planted by streams of water." (See Psalm 1:3.)

A new believer can be satisfied with what Hebrews 5:13 calls milk. They are amazed with the truth they suddenly find so abundant in the Bible. New believers usually appear excited because they are drinking from the newly discovered living well. If asked why they seem so full of life, they might respond, "I was once blind, but now I see!" Is it normal for this excitement to wear off as the new believer becomes better acquainted with the Word? It seems to be common among North American Christians but does it have to be this way? Actually, the Bible clearly states that the intensity of our experience with God should only increase with maturity. The writer of Hebrews implies though, that as time goes on, the consistency of the nourishment must change in the normal maturation process. Perhaps the lukewarm nature of our spirituality is due to improper nourishment.

Where do we find the solid food necessary to satisfy our souls? Can we simply open the Bible and expect to find it by reading? NO! The solid food referred to here is not intellectually obtainable. I am convinced that the solid food is nothing less than treasure that must be uncovered by the power of His Spirit as a part of His work called "sanctification." This is a supernatural process that involves the excavating of all that we formerly held dear in order to implant the Living Word in its place. In First Corinthians 2:9-16, we read that *"the Holy Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God, and that He must reveal them to us."* James 1:21 pleads with us to "receive the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." From these passages we see that this supernatural teaching process of the Holy Spirit reaches into the very fabric of our entire being, not just our intellect.

Since I consider myself spiritually famished with stunted growth and cut out of the same mold as the typical North American Christian, should I hope to be nourished on solid food? I do here claim certain promises God makes to me and all that are His. *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in me, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ"*(*Philippians 1:6*). He predestined me to be conformed to the image of His Son. (See Romans 8:29.) Though these promises stand on their own, my experience in life testifies that they are true. In spite of my waywardness, God's work of sanctification and teaching continue thereby resulting in my transformation, or said another way, spiritual maturation. Based upon the promises of God and confirmed by my life's experience, I can confidently say that all who are in Christ will be transformed into the image of Jesus as their life unfolds. The extent of this process varies from Christian to Christian but nothing shall stay His hand or thwart His purposes for us.

Coupled with these promises is another one, *"Seek and you shall find"* (Matthew 7:7). If I hunger for more of Him and plead with Him to glorify Himself in my life, this transforming process will be more noticeable and observable. God will move mountains and shake the very foundations of anyone who desperately pleads with God to show Himself. The heavenly city will become more visible and the earthly existence more loathsome in comparison. Desires will change so much that we will wonder why we once placed such high value on things like "having a good time" or having a comfortable life, or success or accomplishments. To those who have tasted of the Bread of Heaven, the pleasures of this world are at best, misery compared to being filled with all the fullness of God. The blessed one truly believes that to die is gain because only then will he fully experience glorious, heart-pounding eternal life and observe the very glory of God forever in His bosom.

God's transforming process by its very nature, is designed to cause us to experience the essence of death, even without loss of physical life. In I Peter 1:6-8, this supernatural process is portrayed as God's loving work to wean our hearts from its love of this life while filling it with new desires and "joy inexpressible and full of glory" (v8). Indispensable to this process are "diverse trials" (v.6) which he uses in this weaning process. Though we have a tendency to run from these trials, the mature believer has learned (really) to count it all joy when God providentially brings trials upon him (James 1:2). He knows that the trials will unearth the glory of God in his heart thus producing "joy inexpressible and full of glory." The deeper the treasure, the greater the joy. Blessed is he who bears the shovel marks of God in the very walls of his heart. It is in that place where God plants His deepest treasure, the Living Word.

"Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance" (Isaiah 55:2b)."